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July 8, 2015

To: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
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Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
Supervisor Don Knabe

From: Sachi A. Hamai
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors
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First District

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS
Second District

SHEILA KUEHL
Third District

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Fourth District

MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Fifth District

SACRAMENTO UPDATE

Executive Summary

This memorandum contains reports on the following:

- **Pursuit of County Position to Support SB 94.** This measure is a trailer bill which includes a County-sponsored proposal to clarify existing State law to provide priority enrollment to foster children and children with parents under Child Protective Services (CPS) supervision in subsidized child care development services. Therefore, unless otherwise directed, consistent with the Board-approved motion of March 17, 2015, which directed the Chief Executive Office to pursue legislation to clarify existing law to explicitly include foster children and children with parents under CPS supervision for priority enrollment in subsidized child care development services, and consistent with existing Board-approved policy to: 1) support efforts to ensure that vulnerable children and their families have access to consistent, uninterrupted subsidized early care and education services; and 2) support efforts to enhance the quality of early care and education that set high standards for all services and program types and address the needs of all children and their families, **the Sacramento advocates will support SB 94.**
- **Joint Legislative Audit Committee.** A report on the committee's action related to an audit request to examine how counties, including Los Angeles, are addressing the needs of dual-status youth.

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Pursuit of County Position on Legislation

SB 94 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review), which as amended on June 29, 2015, is a trailer bill that includes a County-sponsored proposal, pursuant to the Board-approved motion on March 17, 2015, to clarify existing law under the California Education Code to provide priority enrollment to foster children and children with parents under Child Protective Services (CPS) supervision in subsidized child care development services.

SB 94 also includes two other child care-related provisions, which are non-controversial, that would: 1) revise the current term “underserved area” under the Child Care and Development Services Act to include areas where the overall number of eligible children without access to publicly subsidized child care and development program services is high, and not only where it is low as prescribed by existing law; and 2) repeal the current sunset provision for the San Mateo County Child Care Pilot Program and allow this county to implement the individualized county child care subsidy plan indefinitely.

Background

Under current law, categorical eligibility and priority enrollment is provided in State and Federal Subsidized Child Care and Development Services that serve children from birth to 12 years of age and older children with exceptional needs, including abused or neglected children who are receiving Child Protective Services (CPS) or are at risk of being abused or neglected. Second priority for enrollment is provided to income-eligible families. Within this priority, families with the lowest gross monthly income relative to family size are admitted first.

However, there is a lack of clarity in the existing State policy resulting in vague identification and enrollment regulations. Based on a child welfare understanding of current law, children receiving protective services and children at risk of abuse or neglect should be categorically eligible and prioritized for child care and development services. However, early care and education providers’ understanding of the policy is that only children who are classified as imminently at risk of abuse or neglect are eligible to receive priority enrollment for subsidized child care and development services.

County Impact

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) indicates there is a significant need in Los Angeles County to ensure access to child care and developmental services for the parents and caregivers of DCFS-supervised children. There is also a need to provide access to child care for those children whose young parents are under DCFS supervision (pregnant and parenting teens) and who are aging out of foster care.

According to the Chief Executive Office - Office of Child Care, access to consistent and high quality early care and education services can mitigate the negative impacts of abuse and neglect on young children. Furthermore, these programs can assist teen parents with the support they need to graduate from high school while strengthening their skills as parents and contributing to the optimal development of their children.

Conclusion

This office and the Department of Children and Family Services support SB 94. Therefore, unless otherwise directed, consistent with the March 17, 2015 Board-approved motion directing the Chief Executive Office to pursue legislation to clarify existing law to explicitly include foster children and children with parents under CPS supervision for priority enrollment in subsidized child care development services, and consistent with existing Board-approved policy to: 1) support efforts to ensure that vulnerable children and their families have access to consistent, uninterrupted subsidized early care and education services; and 2) support efforts to enhance the quality of early care and education that set high standards for all services and program types and address the needs of all children and their families, **the Sacramento advocates will support SB 94.**

SB 94 is currently pending in the Assembly Budget Committee.

Joint Legislative Audit Committee Hearing

On June 17, 2015, the Joint Legislative Audit Committee approved, by a vote of 11 to 1, a request by Assembly Member Eggman to examine how counties are addressing the needs of dual-status youth.

Existing Law authorizes counties to designate a minor as a dependent child and a ward of the juvenile court, known as dual-status. Specifically, current law allows county probation and child welfare services departments, in consultation with the juvenile court, to create protocols which permit minors to be designated as dual-status for the purposes of: 1) improving the handling of cases in which minors may fall within either category; and 2) helping increase access to appropriate resources and services for these children in a holistic manner. Currently, 15 counties, including Los Angeles, have chosen to employ the dual-status option.

Assembly Member Eggman requested the audit to examine the outcomes of services provided to this population of children. The audit will be conducted by the State Auditor and will include a comparison of the services and outcomes for dual-status youth over the last three years between three dual-status counties (including Los Angeles County) and three non-dual status counties.

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Additional information on the audit scope and objectives is available at the State Auditor's website at: <https://bsa.ca.gov/reports/scope/2015-115>

The audit report is estimated to be released in January 2016.

We will continue to keep you advised.

SAH:JJ:MR
OR:PC:gl

c: All Department Heads
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